

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5984
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG IS PEPR
SUBJECT: CAIRO PRESS TREATS ATHERTON TALKS IN LOW KEY

SUMMARY: LOW KEY COVERAGE OF ATHERTON TALKS
NOTES THAT GOE HAS RESPONDED TO ISRAELI PROPOSALS, BUT
PROVIDES NO DETAILS. UNEXPECTEDLY SADAT, RECUPERATING
FROM BOUT OF FLU, CALLS ATHERTON TO ISMA'ILIYA FOR FEB 24
MEETING, AGAIN PROVING THAT PRESIDENT ALONE RESPONSIBLE
FOR DECISION MAKING DURING PEACE PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. CAIRO DAILIES FEB 24 TREAT ATHERTON MEETING WITH
FONMIN KAMIL AND MINSTATE GHALI IN LOW KEY, INSTEAD
HIGHLIGHTING EARLIER FOREIGN AFFAIRS DISCUSSION IN IS-
MA'ILIYA BETWEEN SADAT, KAMIL, AND PRIMIN SALIM. DE-
SPITE CURRENT EGYPTIAN IMBROGLIO OVER "PALESTINIAN
TERRORISM" IN CYPRUS (SEPTEL), DAILIES STRESS SADAT
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INSISTENCE THAT ME SOLUTION INVOLVES FULL RESTORATION OF
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL
OCCUPIED LANDS, INCLUDING ARAB JERUSALEM. SADAT REPORT-
EDLY ASSERTED THAT, DESPITE HIS RECUPERATION FROM BOUT
OF FLU, HE WAS CLOSELY FOLLOWING PEACE PROCESS AND WOULD
"CONTRIBUTE" TO ATHERTON'S PEACE EFFORTS. (COMMENT:
PRESIDENCY CONTACTED ATHERTON CIRCA MIDNIGHT FEB 23,

AFTER MEETING WITH KAMIL AND GHALI, TO SET UP UNSCHEDULED MEETING IN ISMA'ILIYA FOLLOWING DAY BETWEEN ATHERTON AND PRESIDENT.)

2. ARTICLES NOTE EGYPTIANS PRESENTED ATHERTON WITH REPLY TO PROPOSALS PRESENTED BY ISRAELI SIDE "DURING ATHERTON'S TALKS IN JERUSALEM" AND THAT DISCUSSION "VERY FRUITFUL". DAILIES PROVIDE NO DETAILS OF, OR SPECULATION ON, SUB-STANCE OF TALKS, MERELY QUOTING ATHERTON THAT HE INTENDED TO RETURN TO CAIRO "SEVERAL TIMES" AND KAMIL THAT ATHERTON MISSION UNDERSCORED U.S. EFFORTS TO HELP PARTIES TO ME DISPUTE REACH A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. NO HINT OF FEB 24 SADAT-ATHERTON MEETING CONTAINED IN ARTICLES, ALTHOUGH PAPERS NOTE THAT ATHERTON HAD EXPECTED TO CONTACT SADAT BY TELEPHONE FOR "INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS."

3. COMMENT: DESPITE KAMIL-ATHERTON AGREEMENT TO FOREGO MEETING WITH SADAT AND TO ALLOW PRESIDENT TO CONTINUE WITH HIS RECUPERATION FROM FLU, IT CLEAR THAT SADAT MADE DECISION TO MEET WITH ATHERTON AFTER HEARING REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS FROM KAMIL. UNEXPECTED SADAT DECISION HIGH-LIGHTS WHAT BECOMING INCREASINGLY A FOREIGN POLICY FACT OF LIFE IN EGYPT: SENIOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISORS NOT ALWAYS CERTAIN EXACTLY WHAT PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND AND THUS MUST DEFER ANY DECISIONS TO SADAT PERSONALLY.

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